Safety Guidelines for Service-Learning Classes
Boise State University
9/21/09 (KB)

Safety tips faculty should discuss with Service-Learning students

1. **Discuss** the risks involved in service, as well as the benefits and the skills required of students. Orient students to potential situations (this is easier if the instructor is familiar with the service site and service work).

2. **Set up** a line of communication for students to report any difficulties.

3. **Discuss** safety information (see “Safety Tips” below). Emphasize that students should go in pairs if visiting private homes.

4. **Explain** transportation, insurance, and liability. Students should have their own health and auto insurance. Tell students:
   a. Boise State insurance does not cover student injuries, but it will cover third party injuries or damage. Agency liability insurance* will cover student injuries as long as the student’s activities are within the scope of course guidelines and the student/agency agreement. Recommend students carry their own health insurance.
   b. The university is not liable for risks involved in students getting to and from their service sites. (It’s a good idea for faculty to provide some service-learning opportunities within walking distance from campus.)
   c. Reinforce that students should not drive clients.
   d. Inform students that the decision to bring children is completely their own, and that it is a matter between the agency and the student. The University has no liability for a student's decision to allow a minor to participate. Tell students to contact the Service-Learning staff if they are feeling pressured to bring their children.

If faculty are not using the Service-Learning website for student registration:

5. **Talk** with the community-based organization about their insurance for volunteers (if you are developing your own sites), or contact the Service-Learning Director for a list of organizations already approved. Kara Brascia 426-2380 karabrascia@boisestate.edu

6. **Create** a contract between the student and the organization offering the community service, the learning objectives, and the date of completed projects and time requirements. (This will automatically print out for students signing up via the SL website).

The information in this Safety handout was partially adapted from the following organizations:
Indiana University’s: Guidelines for Managing Risk in Community Service and Service-Learning
Boise State University: Nursing Programs Safety Guidelines
California State University: Best Practices for Managing Risk in Service-Learning
TCC’s: Serving Smart: Tips for Risk Management
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Safety Tips for Students Serving In the Community

COMMUNICATE
1. Ask your agency supervisor for tips on staying safe
2. Tell someone your destination and your tentative return time.
3. Ask for help from your supervisor or another staff member when in doubt.
4. Request an alternate service site if you feel uncomfortable or unsafe with your current site.

PLAN AHEAD
5. Plan for “what if’s” (what if car breaks down, what if I can’t find clients or agency address, etc.)
6. Wear appropriate, modest, easy-to-move in attire, consistent with agency policy. Wear sturdy shoes.
7. Don’t engage in activities beyond the scope of your class or your student/agency agreement.
8. Plan to go in pairs if visiting people in private homes.

TRANSPORTATION
9. Do not give a client a ride in a personal vehicle. Note: driving cannot be a requirement of your service.
10. Drive carefully; the university is not liable for risks involved in students getting to and from their service sites.

CHILDREN SERVING WITH YOU
11. If you would like to take your children with you, make sure you get prior permission from the agency.
12. NOTE: BSU has no liability for a student's decision to allow their children to participate. For that reason, BSU recommends you do not take your children with you.

BOUNDARIES
13. AGAIN: Even if asked, don’t give a client a ride in a personal vehicle.
14. DON’T give or loan clients money or other personal belongings.
15. DON’T share too much personal information (phone number, address, etc)
16. DON’T tolerate talk or behavior of a sexual nature. If you feel harassed, tell your supervisor or instructor.
17. DON’T engage in any type of business with clients during the term of your service
18. DON’T enter into a personal relationship with a client during the term of your service.

HOME VISITS
19. Get information about the client, cultural norms, and their situation prior to the home visit.
20. AGAIN: Go in pairs when possible.
21. Try not to be alone with clients without adequate supervision.
22. Consider meeting at a neutral place (at the agency or at a public building) or going with another student.
23. Keep your agency informed of your plans and itinerary and check in by phone on a prearranged schedule.
24. When you arrive, think about where to sit (keep an unobstructed path to the door).
25. Trust your intuition; if something does not feel right, leave. Talk to your agency supervisor about your concerns and ask to switch clients.

INJURIES
26. Protect yourself: carry your own health insurance (BSU student health insurance is a good option).
Boise State liability insurance does not cover student injuries (but it will cover third party injuries or damage).
Agency liability insurance will cover student injuries as long as the student’s activities are within the scope of course guidelines and the student/agency agreement.

If Something Happens:
27. If an incident occurs or if you are injured, contact your agency supervisor and your instructor to discuss what actions the agency and school should take to insure your physical and emotional well-being. You should fill out an incident report form within 48 hours. The form is at http://servicelearning.boisestate.edu/forms
28. Stay calm. Your instructor, the agency, and the SL staff will help you (call 426-2380 for SL staff).